

The Fourth Sunday of Lent

My dear Friends,

This Sunday we celebrate one of the loveliest days in the Christian Calendar. The Fourth Sunday in Lent is always marked as Mothering Sunday, an event which is happily adopted by the secular world, even though it is called generally Mother's Day. We know that it was a day when in former times youngsters who had gone away to work were allowed home to visit their mothers. It is said they would pick hedgerow spring flowers on the way as a simple nosegay gift for their mothers.

It was also a day when Christians would gather at their 'mother church', for many this would be the Cathedral of the diocese. Both these traditions even if wanted to follow them would be impossible for us to emulate now under the current legal restrictions that we are under. However we are still allowed to worship in our parish churches following the strict guidelines under the law. Remember this was something we could not do last year as lockdown had begun, our churches were shut and we all thought it would not be too long before things were back to normal!

One of the happier aspects of our services on Mothering Sunday in normal times is the presence of more families with young children. We are usually joined by large numbers of our beavers, cubs and scouts, and their leaders. Normally youngsters from our Sunday Schools are involved by reading the lessons and leading the prayers of intercession. This will not be taking place this coming Sunday. However there is a much valued youthful presence in St Margaret's at this time. Five of our regular choristers are under 18, every week since singing has been permitted, they have helped lead our worship in anthems and hymns. They are joined by their parents who with other young people make up our small, dedicated but very talented choir at this juncture. A sign of new life to raise our spirits.

This Sunday is also called Refreshment Sunday, a midpoint in Lent when traditionally the fast might be lifted. Those who have kept their discipline so far throughout the season are encouraged to have a break and enjoy some relief. So we can indulge a little! It is a glimpse of the coming joy of Easter. The hope of the future in these days continues for many in the freedom that the vaccine may give. I am so pleased to hear that many of those who read these words have had their first dose, some have had appointments for the second and others have actually received their full amount. Those of us who still wait are also hopeful and full of plans.

Finally as well as all the above, we remember with thanksgiving this Sunday not only our own mothers, whether living or departed but also the Mother of our Lord Jesus the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her care and devotion to her son is an example to all Christians as we seek to follow Jesus in times of joy and sorrow just as Mary did. May God bless all our families and those who live alone as we rejoice and are refreshed in the world wide welcoming family of the Church.

Best wishes and prayers
Stewart

The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk,
Vicar of Roath.